

Long Forsaken

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Category: Animorphs

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2000-01-14 08:00:00

Updated: 2000-01-14 08:00:00

Packaged: 2016-04-27 11:30:58

Rating: K+

Chapters: 1

Words: 6,301

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Somebody discovers David...kinda different than most David stories

Long Forsaken

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> AN: Okay, thanx to Starfish and Chard for their help in the title and _especially _Christy, who I couldn't have done this fic without! Hope you all like this =) ~Amalin

The restless waves lapped gently against the boat, rocking it slightly. The waters were calm today, tranquil, smooth, like a mirror of rippling glass. Just a tiny breeze blew the sail, just enough to billow it out, slowly moving the boat. It slipped through the waves, gently splashing the water in its wake.

> It was an altogether peaceful day. The sun beat down on the water, reflecting off, making it shimmer. I loved sailing. One year ago, for my birthday, I had received this little boat. I loved it immediately, had used it ever since. I had named it Moonbeams, and taken it out whenever possible. Usually I went out by myself, but sometimes my brother came along. This time, however, I was alone. It was a beautiful day, though, to be out here by yourself. Just me, the sea, and the sky.

> My head suddenly jerked. Had I heard...no, how could I have, I was alone out here. And yet - I could have sworn I heard sobbing.

> It's nothing, I told myself firmly. _It's in your own mind._

>But no, there it was again. Sobbing. I swiftly, easily turned the ship. It was coming from the rocks, I was sure of that much.

>

And there, again. Yes, surely someone was there. But who - and why? I knew it was dangerous to sail this close to shore, with all the rocks, but I would try. Feeling the wind fill the sail, feeling the worn rope coarse beneath my hand, I smiled and directed the little boat into more shallow waters.

>
It was not until I steered my boat past the rocks of where I had
estimated the sobbing was coming from that I realized it couldn't
have been. It was complete wilderness here, no sign of human life but
old garbage that had been washed up. Nothing living but rats
inhabited these rocks.
>
It was_ your mind, you see?_ I thought. _Nothing but your own
mind. As if anyone could have been here - and you could have heard it
from the boat from out there!_
><font
size="-1"> _Help!_
> I
nearly jumped. There, for sure, was a voice. And yet...in my mind.
Was I imagining things? It was then I realized the sobbing, too, had
been in my head. Positioning my hand on the tiller once more, I made
to turn the boat away, almost disgusted with myself for believing I
had heard something - anything.
>
No! Help me! No, please - please, don't leave...>
>
Surely I couldn't be imagining...
>
"Who are you?" I called, my voice drifting on the wind. I realized
how foolish I seemed, how foolish this was, and yet did not
sail away.
>
D-David.>
>
"Wh-where are you?" I asked, barely daring to wonder. Barely daring
to ask, not sure I wanted to know the answer.
> I
- I'm - I'm a rat.>
> I
blinked. Shook my head slightly, almost in disbelief. "What?"

> I
know. It's hard to believe. But I'm one of these rats.>

>
Managing to recover from my astonishment - and instant reaction of
repulsion - I swallowed hard. "Which one are you?"
>
I'll climb towards the very edge of the rock, all right?> he said.
After a moment, I saw a rat climbing nearer to the boat. Hesitantly -
swallowing my fear and disgust - I reached out. Stiffening my hand to
keep it from trembling noticeably, I carefully and tentatively picked
the rat up.
>
"Is this you?"
>
Yeah.> A pause. You're shaking.>
> I
looked down at my hand and saw the rat - David - vibrating slightly
from sitting on my palm. I sat him down on the seat of the boat,
resisting the urge to wipe my hand on my leg.
>
Gathering my courage, I asked, "Why were you sobbing? Was that
you?"
>

Yeah, that was me,> he admitted. I was - well, how would you like to be stuck as a rat?>
>
"Y-you weren't always one?" I wondered.
>
No! I was human. Like you, like anybody. But then - then...well, there is this machine, this blue box, and it gives you the power to change into any living creature you touch. You can always morph back into your real form, though, unless you stay in morph over two hours. Then you become stuck. Like me.> A trace of bitterness found its way into his voice. Trapped forever.>
>
There was something - something he wasn't saying. It was as if he told me the truth, but left some part out, tiptoed around it. Some...important fact.
>
"Why...well, no offense for asking, but why were you changing into a rat in the first place?" I asked tentatively.
>
It's a long story,> David said. Really, you don't want to know.> There was another pause of silence, stretching between us. After a few moments, he asked, So who are you, anyway?>

>
"Madra," I said. "Madra Gervais, they tell me my real name was, but I don't know my parents. I don't know what happened to them. But me and my brother, we were left, so now we're adopted." I stopped abruptly, realizing I might have said too much. I didn't normally tell this much about my past to people I had just met.
>
Well...thanks for coming, Madra,> David said. It helps, actually talking to someone, you know? Sometimes...the rat senses...well, I don't know, it's kind of hard to remember you're human sometimes. The instincts just take you and...> He stopped, seeming to shudder a little.
>
"I guess it's pretty horrible," I said, shivering myself. "How long have you been...like that?"
> A long time,> he sighed. At least four, maybe five years.>

>
"Four or five years! That's terrible," I exclaimed. "I can't imagine...well, spending that many years of your life as a...a rat..."
>
And many more,> he added, just a hint of self-pity in his voice. Unless, of course, my little rat body is close to death.>

>
"So how old would you be in human years, then?" I asked, ignoring his comment of his death.
> I don't even know anymore. High school. Late teens. But then, if I somehow got to demorph, I'd be back at around fourteen.>

> I shivered again. "That'd be weird, having an older mind in a younger body."
>

It's even weirder, being in a rat body, trust me,> he said. And if you ever get the chance to do it? Don't.>
>
"Do what?" I asked, confused.
>
Morph. If you ever get the chance to morph - I don't know how, maybe those...well, never mind. But just don't.>
>
Those what? I wondered. _He was about to say something. To say, those... But he never finished. Didn't want to finish. Didn't want to speak about it, or at least tell me._
> I glanced up at the sky, and noticed with a start how far the sun had moved. I moved my gaze down to my watch, and sighed. "Uhm, David?" I wondered how it would feel to be called by your own name, but not in your own body. "I've got to get home, okay? Sorry, but my mom said I could only go sailing if I was back for dinner, and..."

> I gently scooped him into my hand and dumped him back onto the rock.
>
"I'll come back," I called, shifting the tiller and feeling the wind fill the sails. However, my mind was too preoccupied to feel the full joy of sailing. My boat began to weave off through the rocks, slipping through the glassy water once again.
>
Wait! No, no...Madra! Noooo! Don't leave me here!>
>
"I'll come back!" I shouted again, hearing the sudden panic in his voice.
>
No! Don't leave me here on this godforsaken rock! I can't take it...Please! Maadraaaaa...> His voice faded away as the wind sailed my boat farther and farther away. I closed my eyes to stop the tear threatening to slip out, and turned away.

"David? H-hello?"
> I didn't dare let go of the tiller, as the wind was much stronger today.
>
Madra?? I heard, his voice filled with disbelief. You came back?>
>
"Of course I came back," I said. "I told you I would, didn't I?"
>
Switching the ropes I clutched in my left hand into my right, which was still holding the tiller steady, I freed my left hand. Reaching out, I felt little claws prick my palm as David climbed on. I drew back my hand, dropping him in the bottom of Moonbeams.

> What happened? Where are we going?>
>
"Sailing!" I laughed. "You'll love it."
>

What if I fall in?> he demanded. I'll drown!>
>
"If you don't climb onto the edge of the boat, you won't fall in," I
said reasonably. "And anyway, if you do, I'll dive in after
you. I can swim."
>
There was a pause. Sorry. I didn't think you'd come back. I guess I
was surprised.>
>
"I keep my promises, David," I said. "Don't worry. Maybe someday
we'll even get you off this rock."
>
Aren't you taking me away now?>
> I
sighed. I had thought for a long time on this the night before, lying
awake in the dark. Wondering about his reaction had plagued my
thoughts, and yet I knew I was right. "No. Not yet."
>
Not yet? Not yet? But...>
>
"Where would you go, David? Do you want to crawl along in the city,
to live in dumpsters, in alleys? With a greater risk of being killed?
Of being lost? What if I could never find you again? Admit it -
you're safer here."
>
Here? Where's here? This is nowhere! It's a little tiny
rock.>
>
"It's where I know I can find you," I said. "And I will keep
coming back, until it's safe for you to leave."
>
Really?> I could hear the hope in his voice, disguised, yes, but
still there. The painful sound of hope from someone barely daring to,
of someone who has no reason to hope anymore.
>
"Yes, really," I replied, firmly. "I promise I will."

>
The wind tugged at the sails and I switched the ropes back into my
left hand, tightening them. The waves were much choppy today, but
somehow I felt more joy. "Hey, David? I brought you some food."

>
Food?>
>
"Human food," I clarified, feeling his eyes eagerly watching me. I
dug in my pocket and pulled out a little bag. Dumping the contents
onto the bottom of the boat, I watched him eat.
>
T-thanks, Madra,> he managed, eating quickly. You have no idea how
good this is.>
>
"It was just some stuff I had around the house," I said. "You know,
crackers, leftover bits of chicken, all that."
> A
lot better than what I eat,> David said. Thanks.>
> A
pause, and then he spoke again. You really like sailing?>

>

"Yeah. I dunno why, maybe I inherited the love for it or something. I got this boat last year, and I've used it ever since."

> I guess that's good, or you'd never have found me,> David said. What's your boat called?>

> "Moonbeams," I replied. "I don't exactly know why I named it that, it just felt right." Why had I named it that? I really wasn't sure. I just remember seeing the boat, clean, sparkling, new, and thinking of that name. Thinking how perfect it was.

> Moonbeams,> David mused. Nice. You go sailing a lot by yourself, I guess, then?>

> "Sometimes my brother comes," I said. "Darwin. But he's busy, a lot. With The Sharing."

> The Sharing?> David's tone suddenly turned sharp. Madra, do you belong to The Sharing?>

> "I went to a couple meetings," I said, bewildered at his sudden change. "I guess I like being alone more than in a big group like The Sharing, though. Why?"

> Don't ever, ever join,> David warned. Never. It's a...well, never mind. Just don't.>

> Another sentence begun that was never finished. Like yesterday, when he had begun to tell me never to morph, but never finished that either.

> "When are you ever going to finish those started sentences?" I whispered, more to myself than to him. I don't know if he heard me or not, but he never replied.

> "You have a lot of...secrets...about your past, huh?" I asked, sounding more nonchalant than I felt.

> You could say so,> David said, a bitter sound in his voice. I guess I'm - always have been - an outcast.>

> I wondered if he ever felt the need to be alone, like me. That's why I went sailing so often, I guess. And because you love it, I reminded myself firmly. As if hearing my thoughts, he spoke again.

> I always wanted to be part of...of something. Just something important, so I wouldn't feel so alone. So lost.>

> For me, the cure to feeling alone was to be alone. It didn't really make sense, even to me, so I didn't tell him that...but I thought it.

> "The Sharing?" I said instead.

> I hadn't heard of The Sharing before...well...before my life changed. I guess if I would've, I would've joined, but sooner or later I would've had the same fate. Trapped, a prisoner in my own body. Except...> he paused, then continued, if I had joined The Sharing,

I'd actually be alive to the world. Now, to the world, I don't exist anymore.>

>
"You do to me," I whispered.

>
He didn't seem to hear that, either. Laughing bitterly, he added, I became a part of something, all right. But still...I guess I just can't - couldn't. It wasn't enough. I needed...more.>

> I didn't know what, I couldn't understand, but I felt he was admitting something...important...to me.

> I guess I learned my lesson.>

>
The wind whipped the sails, becoming the only sound on the waters as we both fell silent. I stared into the dark waters, feeling the silence growing between us, almost forming a barrier.

>
"We'll find a way to turn you back to human," I whispered finally, though they were just comforting words. And they weren't very comforting either, because both of us knew they weren't true.

>
I'm sure they made very sure there was no way out,> David replied. How else would they be sure of my utter defeat?>

>
"You were...forced...into this?" I exclaimed, almost afraid to ask.

>
How else? What...what better...solution?>

> I felt something - something akin to pity, and yet not quite the same - well up inside me. Almost angrily, denying it, I pushed it down, ignored it. How could I...

>
"Can't you tell me?" I asked quietly after a moment. "Don't you trust me?"

> I don't trust anybody, Madra. Like I said, I've learned my lesson.>

>
"What if I'm not like everybody else? Everybody you've had...experience...with?"

>
He was silent, and feeling pushed away, I turned the boat. I sailed back to the rocks in silence, and David said nothing either. When we got to "his" rock, he looked up at me.

>
Sorry about what I said,> he apologized suddenly. He clambered onto my hand and I set him gently back onto the rock. You will come back, won't you?>

>
"Always," I promised, before my boat sailed on.

"Madra, are you coming this time?"

>
"Coming where?" I called back to my brother, who was standing

impatiently by the door.

>
"The Sharing meeting! I thought you said you were coming."

>
"Today?" I said. "Oh...sorry, I can't."

>
"Why don't you go with Darwin?" my mother asked. "What better things
do you have to do?"

>
"I'm going...sailing," I said lamely.

>
"Sailing?" Darwin repeated. "You're always sailing. The
Sharing _has to be_ more fun."

>
 Don't ever, ever join, David had said. _Never._ He had to
have good reason for saying that, didn't he? "I love sailing," I
retorted. "And besides, Darwin, when was the last time _you_ went
sailing with _me_? _You're_ always doing something for The Sharing."

> A
horn honked from our driveway. Waving quickly, Darwin vanished out
the door.

>
"Madra, you should consider it," my mother said. "It sounds like a
great program."

>
"Well, I - I've - I've heard some of the people that've gone didn't
like it that much."

>
"Darwin loves it," she responded, sounding bewildered. "Well,
whatever you say. Don't stay out sailing too long, all right? A storm
may be coming tonight." I nodded, then followed Darwin out the
door.

I visited David often, more and more frequently as the days went by.
His need for human company seemed to grow, the more often I visited.
Sometimes, what he said didn't quite seem to make sense, but it was
probably the lack of information about his past that I had. I often
wished he'd tell me.

>
"My mom hadn't wanted me to come," I said one day, when the sky was
overcast. "She thought it was going to storm...but really, I think
it'll be a few hours. I can make it."

>
You didn't have to come,> David said, though his tone still
sounded slightly bitter, as it got every time I spoke about someone
like my family or friends.

>
"That's okay," I said. "I - well, I like coming."

>
There was a long silence, where David seemed to be almost engaging in
an argument with himself. Finally, he said, Madra, I have to tell you
something.>

>
"I'm always listening," I said, settling patiently down. I wasn't,
however, at all prepared for what he told me.

>

Several years ago, my family moved to this town...yeah, the one you're living in now. I was new at school, and still an outcast, but then these kids started talking to me. They wanted something I had, though. They always wanted something I had. I had the blue box, their precious blue box, the one that gave the morphing power.> His voice sharpened, taking on a new quality, not exactly the bitterness, but more of an anger.

> I wanted to interrupt, to nod or acknowledge that I'd heard, but I was afraid he might stop.

> They invaded my house. Yes, as animals - they morphed. I didn't realize it then, of course, but the animals were them. I thought they were trained or something. And then, then Visser Three came.> I didn't dare to ask him who Visser Three was, either. They brought it on me! Visser Three tried to get the blue box, but he couldn't. There was this big battle in my house and V-Visser Three, he took away my parents.> He paused thoughtfully. Thoughtful, yet still angry. It was all their fault. First they get my parents made into Controllers, and then..._then_ they draw me into the battles...what was I supposed to _do_? And then they forced me to be like...like this.>

> "Controllers?" I questioned. He didn't seem to hear. He seemed lost in his own thoughts, caught up in the memories. I let him continue.

> They took me away. Let me become an Animorph. That's what they called themselves, Animorphs. And they let me - yes, like joining some private little club, they let me join.> David laughed, harshly. None of them really liked me to begin with. None of them. Not even Cassie.>

> I listened intently as he told me his story, as he revealed to me all the secrets he had kept hidden until now. About the Animorphs, and the battles, and that one turning point where he had given in. Turned on the Animorphs, tried to save his own life by helping Visser Three.

> They thought I was weak, they thought I was a traitor. I was just looking out for myself!> His voice took on another tone, almost argumentative, as if he had argued this point to himself many times over the past years.

> I resisted the urge to tell him to continue. I didn't want him to stop, not now. Not until he was done.

> I guess, in a way, I was a traitor,> he admitted painfully. But that was no reason to do_ this_!>

> I said nothing, only waited. After a moment, he went on. He told me about how Tobias followed him, and...

> "You killed him?" I cried, unable to stop myself.

> They were going to kill _me_, eventually,> David replied. Probably that night, being it Jake and Rachel. Now, if Cassie would have been there...>

> I was horrified. He had been trying to kill them! But I let him

continue, telling myself to hear the whole story before making judgements.

> I tried to kill him,> David amended. You see, at least, this is how I figured it - it wasn't Tobias I killed. Because, at the end...well, you'll see. Anyway, I _thought_ I had killed him. Jake and I fought, then, and ended up at the mall. I killed him - tried to, anyway - as well. Rachel and Ax came - they tried to kill me. I almost had Rachel, too, but she was a gymnast, see.> I didn't see, but said nothing. I left, went to Marco's house. Knocked him out, morphed him. Rachel and Ax came, and I pretended to be asleep. I hit Ax with a baseball bat, but he was already demorphing when Rachel and I flew away, so he wasn't dead. Rachel tried to kill me, somehow, but I almost killed her. Again. Until some bird intervened, I don't know which one of them it was.>

> He paused, choosing his words carefully.

> The next day. School. Rachel threatened me. I followed them around as various things - flies, mostly. Flea, sometimes, cockroach? Whatever worked. They went on another mission, and I followed them as killer whale. They were dolphins. I almost had them, except one of them morphed some other whale.>

> Repeated tries to kill them. I wondered, secretly, if the Animorphs were really so bad. I was trying...trying to...> He trailed off, as if unsure what exactly to say. After a moment of silence, he went on, explaining how he had morphed Jake and Rachel's cousin, who had been dying in a hospital.

> "You morphed him? What happened to the real cousin?" David didn't reply. With a sinking feeling, I realized what had happened. "Go on," I whispered.

> David did, telling me the details of his plan. It was simple. They knew I had them defeated, after the thing with Saddler. Except...I guess...they were smarter than me, even still. But there were six of them! I almost, almost defeated them. One against six.>

> He was glamorizing it, making himself sound brave. And yet, how could I blame him? What would I have done? Well, not that, but I wasn't David.

> I demanded the blue box. They said they'd give it to me.> His voice sounded almost angry, but this time a different anger, an anger with himself. I can't believe I fell for it. I knew them, I should have known they'd have a plan. Oh, I figured they might try to do something, but I never expected what happened.> He hesitated, but he was almost finished. He had to tell me the rest. He told me how the blue box was in pieces, how they tricked him into getting lego pieces. Rachel was my guide,> he explained. The second piece, they caught me. It was a cage of some kind, and Rachel managed to escape.>

> There was something he was avoiding, he was leaving out many details. I said nothing, because it wasn't much. If he wanted to make himself braver, he could.

> They trapped me,> he said. Trapped me as a rat! Rachel,

cold-hearted Rachel, and that Andalite, they stayed and waited for two hours until I was stuck. Forever stuck as a rat.> His voice was full of bitterness, self-pity even, but I detected something more. Hope? Hope of what? That I'd not be disgusted with him?

> They could've just killed me! Why couldn't they have? Death so quickly...much better than this torture...> The feeling rose again in me, pity, yes, but something else too. Something else I dared not think about, because if I did...

> I had been so intent on his story, he just as concentrated on the telling, that neither of us had noticed the clouds creeping closer. Rain began to fall gently on the water, all around us, on me. I looked up, startled.

> I will, though. I will get revenge. I'll get back at them, Madra, I will someday. Someday, when I'm...me...again...>

> I looked back at him, surprised he even remembered I was here.

"Revenge?" I whispered. "N - that - don't-"

> You don't understand, Madra,> he said. Look at what they've done to me! You don't know what it's like, being in this body forever, this body being my body...feeling the instincts, sometimes even forgetting I'm _me_...>

> "You don't need revenge, David," I told him gently. "It's not the answer. You know that, you should know that if you've been musing it for so long. You have to admit...well, admit you were _wrong_."

> Wrong? No, I was wronged! What they did to me...trapping me like this...>

> "What you did to them," I reminded him. "They did what they had to, David, even I can see that. Now you have to do your part."

> My part?>

> "Forgive."

> F-forgive?>

> "You know what you did wasn't the best thing to do," I said softly. "You weren't always right, you weren't always brave...but that doesn't matter. You were wrong, and yet you don't have to be _always _wrong_."

> I...wasn't wrong,> he said, uncertainly. I did what I had to!>

> "What you had to?" I paused, letting my words absorb into his mind as the gentle rain fell to the ground and was absorbed slowly, seeping in wherever it could. "If you forgive now, you'll have changed. It doesn't matter who knows, it's you. But if you stay focused on revenge, don't you see? This..._punishment_...will have been for

nothing. You'll still be wrong."

>
But what will I do?> David finally asked, sounding lost.
Revenge...it's been...my life. It's what I live for, Madra. It's my
motivation. Otherwise, I...before...by now I would probably be dead.>

>
"You'll have to find a new reason to live," I said quietly, yet
firmly. There was silence again, but this time it did not seem to
seperate us, grow between us...rather, it seemed to form some
unspoken bond.

>
The rain was falling more heavily now, dripping down my hair and
soaking my clothes. It spattered onto the glassy water, making the
waters rougher.

>
"I guess I should go," I finally commented, looking at David at last.
"The storm might get worse. I've only been out in a storm once." I
hesitated. "You'll be all right here?"

>
I've lasted over four years - I think I can make it through one
storm,> he laughed. But the happiness in his laugh was missing. He
still sounded lost. Alone.

>
"You'll have to find a new reason to live," I whispered again, before
pushing off and sailing away.

Being out in the storm so long made me sick. I had to stay in bed for
four days, and after that I wasn't allowed out sailing until a week
after. The first day I could go out, it was raining again, but the
next day it was beautiful, warm and sunny. A soft breeze blew, like
the day I had first met David.

>
He's probably worried, I thought to myself as I sailed
towards the rocks on the now-familiar course. It's been over a week.
I wonder - he can't have thought I left for good after what he told
me?_

><font
size="-1"> "David!" I yelled when I neared the rocks, sailing
up next to his. "David! David?"

>
Despite myself, deep inside I felt a growing worry. Deep inside
beside the feeling that wasn't pity at all, no, that in reality was
love and not like pity at all.

>
"David?" I called with growing urgency. I glanced below me and saw a
rat - or it's body - thin, eyes glazed. It was wounded, as if from a
fight. It could be any rat, I said firmly to myself. Any rat
at all! There has to be hundreds around here._

><font
size="-1"> But out of those hundreds, it had to be David.
Despite the optimistic outlook I tried to keep, I knew deep inside it
was him. A sort of sixth sense.

>
"David," I mourned, gently reaching out to run my finger down the
little rat body. Please, I prayed, please, please don't let
it be him._

><font

size="-1"> With trembling fingers, I lifted him. Almost unaware to the tears running uncontrollably down my face, I gently bent over and pressed my lips to the body.

>"I came back," I whispered, half-hoping that any moment now he would appear, alive and well, to realize I had returned. "I told you I'd come back, and I did," I sobbed. "Even after what you told me! Even if you didn't forgive them, even after what I told you, I forgave you."

>M-Madra?> The little body stirred beneath my hands - just barely. Just the tiniest movement.

>"David? David?"

> I - you came back.>

>"I told you I would," I whispered, bending down to look closer. "W-what happened?"

>He didn't reply. All was silent, and for a second I thought he had really died.

>You were my reason, Madra,> he finally said. You told me to find a reason, a reason to - to live...and I, well...it was you.>

>"I - David, I-"

>He shifted slightly, and sighed.

>After a moment, I realized there was no movement under my fingers. Desperately, wildly, I pressed my fingers over his heart. It was still.

>"Nooo! David!" I knelt over in the little boat, my tears flowing freely down my face, grieving alone for one who had existed only to me, for me, yet meant the world.

>His voice echoed in my head.

>F-forgive?

> And be forgiven.

> I guess I learned my lesson, he had said.

>Now, to the world, I don't exist anymore._

>You exist - existed - to me.

> I always wanted to be part of...of something_._

>You were a part of me, David, a part of my life. That was enough.

>

End

file.